



Arizona Department of Agriculture

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

RELEASE DATE: February 19, 2015

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CITRUS QUARANTINE REACHES MARICOPA COUNTY

Public Urged Not to Move Citrus from Quarantine

A small area in Gila Bend marks the first part of Maricopa County to be added to the quarantine for Asian Citrus Psyllid. The Department of Agriculture along with federal partners first discovered the tiny insect within our borders in November 2009.

While good diligence and help from the public has slowed the spread of the psyllid, there are now 22,677 square miles in Arizona affected by the quarantine. Quarantine patches range across the southern and western parts of the state from Santa Cruz to Yuma to Mohave Counties and now Maricopa County (map attached).

"We've all done a good job slowing the progress of the insect, but we have to do more," said John Caravetta, Department of Agriculture Associate Director for Plant Services. "We urge the public to not take citrus fruit, plants or cuttings from the areas within the quarantines. We have too much at stake to not pay attention to the immense threat of this tiny insect."

The Asian Citrus Psyllid, smaller than the point of a ballpoint pen, can carry Citrus Greening Disease (Huanglongbing) which is fatal to citrus

trees. The disease is not in the state, but the presence of the insect means that it could easily spread through the state if it makes it here.

Arizona's \$37 million dollar citrus industry, plus all the supporting jobs and the beauty of backyard citrus is at risk from the disease. In places like Florida, Citrus Greening Disease has devastated groves and wiped out farmers.

State quarantines restrict movement of potential carriers of the pest, and the state requires treatment of any commercial citrus groves or nursery where the Asian Citrus Psyllid has been detected. We're also watching for the first signs of the disease statewide, because early detection gives us the best opportunity to Save Our Citrus.

The best way to buy citrus plants is through local nurseries and garden centers; they have the varieties that are best suited for Arizona's climate and soils. Buying online may be tempting, but you could be importing infested or infected citrus plants that could be devastating to your yard, your neighborhood, and Arizona's citrus industry.

There are photos of the psyllid on the
Department website and information about citrus
greening at SaveOurCitrus.org